

Long acupuncture needle broken in the abdomen

A patient presented to our emergency department with a history of hypertension and hypothyroidism. The patient had undergone a long acupuncture needle insertion through the abdomen by an acupuncturist about 20 min before. The acupuncturist, who brought the patient to our hospital, said the long acupuncture needle had not been removed completely and showed us an example of the type of needle used in the patient (figure 1A). The patient's laboratory results were unremarkable, without any findings of leukocytosis. On physical examination the patient had no abdominal tenderness. Abdominal CT scan showed a 7.3 cm long acupuncture needle in the left paravertebral space and a subcutaneous haematoma in the left lower abdominal wall (figure 2).

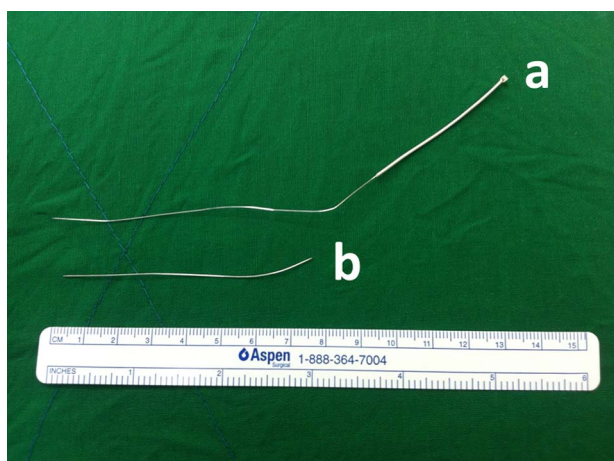


Figure 1 (a) Example of the acupuncture needle used in the patient (bent for comparison). (b) Acupuncture needle removed from the patient.



Figure 2 Abdominopelvic CT scan showing acupuncture needle 7.3 cm long in the left paravertebral space.

The patient was offered surgical exploration. After general anaesthesia, minimal haemorrhage at the omentum occurred. The needle was found in the left side of the abdominal aorta sheath, 2 cm from the inferior mesenteric artery root. The needle was removed using mosquito forceps (figure 1B). The patient's recovery was delayed due to epigastric discomfort after eating, but it was uncertain whether the delayed gastric emptying was associated with the removal procedure. The patient was discharged 27 days after the operation.

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Acknowledgements Detail has been removed from this case description to ensure anonymity.

Competing interests None.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.



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To cite Kang J. *Acupunct Med* 2014;**32**:370.



► <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/acupmed-2014-010655>



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Acupunct Med 2014 32: 370

doi: 10.1136/acupmed-2014-010621

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